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ACTION AF-00

INFO	LOG-00	NP-00	AGRE-00	AID-00	AMAD-00	ACQ-00	CIAE-00
	INL-00	DODE-00	SRPP-00	DS-00	EB-00	EUR-00	VC-00
	FRB-00	H-01	TEDE-00	INR-00	IO-00	LAB-01	L-00
	VCE-00	AC-01	NSAE-00	OIC-02	OMB-01	OPIC-01	PA-00
	PM-00	PRS-00	ACE-00	P-00	SCT-00	SP-00	STR-00
	USIE-00	PMB-00	DSCC-00	PRM-01	DRL-02	G-00	NFAT-00
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FM AMEMBASSY HARARE
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 7507
INFO NSC WASHDC PRIORITY
DEPT OF TREASURY WASHDC
USDOC WASHDC
SOUTHERN AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY
AMEMBASSY NAIROBI

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 HARARE 006190

SIPDIS

NSC FOR SENIOR AFRICA DIRECTOR GAYLE SMITH
USDOC FOR DHENKE-ROGERS
LONDON FOR CGURNEY
PARIS FOR BISA WILLIAMS
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PASS USAID FOR AFR/SD - DWELLER, AFR/SA - CPALMA,
NNEWMAN, AA/AFR - VDERRYCK, AND A/AID - RMCCALL

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USTR FOR ROSA WHITAKER

E.O. 12958: DECL 11/02/10
TAGS: [PHUM](#) [EAGR](#) [PREL](#) [EALD](#) [ZI](#)
SUBJECT: VIOLENCE ON ZIMBABWE COMMERCIAL FARMS
INCREASING AS FAST-TRACK LAND REFORM PROGRAM ACCELERATES

CLASSIFIED BY AMBASSADOR TOM MCDONALD FOR REASONS 1.5
(B) AND (D).

[1](#)1. (C) SUMMARY: WITH THE BEGINNING OF THE RAINS ON OCTOBER 27, VIOLENCE ON COMMERCIAL FARMS HAS INCREASED AS THE GOVERNMENT OF ZIMBABWE (GOZ) ACCELERATES ITS FAST-TRACK LAND REFORM AND RESETTLEMENT PROGRAM TO BEAT THE ONSET OF THE PLANTING SEASON. THE RESULT HAS BEEN DISORDER AND CONFUSION ON OCCUPIED FARMS. THREE WHITE COMMERCIAL FARMERS WERE VIOLENTLY AND SERIOUSLY ASSAULTED IN THE LAST TEN DAYS. A GOZ MINISTER APPEARED ON NATIONAL TELEVISION TELLING THE POPULACE THAT THE GOZ DID NOT HAVE THE RESOURCES TO DEMARCAT E LAND FOR RESETTLEMENT, SO THEY SHOULD DO IT THEMSELVES. HE ADDED THAT THE GOZ WILL FORMALIZE SUCH ACTIONS IN THE FUTURE. REPORTS CONTINUE TO REACH THE EMBASSY THAT MILITARY AND POLICE VEHICLES ARE BEING USED TO FERRY PEOPLE TO OCCUPY FARMS, AND MILITARY AND POLICE OFFICERS ALSO ARE CLAIMING LAND FOR THEMSELVES. ON NOVEMBER 1 THE ZANU-PF MAJORITY IN PARLIAMENT PASSED AN AMENDMENT TO THE LAND ACQUISITION ACT TO CODIFY FORMALLY THE GOZ'S LAND REFORM PROGRAM. MDC MP DAVID COLTART INFORMED ECONOFF THAT MUGABE'S INTENTION IS TO DESTROY COMMERCIAL FARMING, EVEN IF IT WRECKS THE ZIMBABWE ECONOMY, BECAUSE HE

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CONSIDERS COMMERCIAL FARMERS TO BE ONE OF THE PRINCIPAL FINANCIAL SUPPORT BASES OF THE MDC. ALL OF THESE DEVELOPMENTS POINT TO THE COLLAPSE OF COMMERCIAL AGRICULTURE, AND BODE ILL FOR ZIMBABWE'S FUTURE FOOD SECURITY. END SUMMARY.

VIOLENCE INCREASING AS RAINY SEASON BEGINS

[1](#)2. (C) WITH THE BEGINNING OF THE RAINY SEASON ACROSS ZIMBABWE ON OCTOBER 27, THE LAND RESETTLEMENT PROGRAM HAS REACHED A FEVER PITCH. THERE ARE NUMEROUS CREDIBLE REPORTS OF FARM OCCUPIERS PREVENTING COMMERCIAL FARMERS FROM PLANTING, STATING THAT THE FARMS NO LONGER BELONG TO THEM. OTHER REPORTS SAY FARM OCCUPIERS ARE UPROOTING COMMERCIAL CROPS IN ORDER TO PLANT THEIR OWN MAIZE, OR BUILDING SHACKS ON TOP OF FRESHLY PLANTED FIELDS, REGARDLESS OF WHETHER OR NOT THE COMMERCIAL FARMS HAVE BEEN GAZETTED BY THE GOVERNMENT FOR ACQUISITION. TREE CUTTING AND POACHING OF BOTH DOMESTIC AND GAME ANIMALS IS RAMPANT. THREATS OF VIOLENCE BY WAR VETERANS ARE

INCREASING, WITH THE THREATS FOLLOWED UP BY ATTACKS ON
COMMERCIAL FARMERS. ONE ASSAULT BY WAR VETERANS ON A
FARMER LED TO A BROADER VIOLENT ALTERCATION BETWEEN WAR
VETERANS AND FARM WORKERS WHO CAME TO HIS RESCUE. A
GROUP OF 150 UNKNOWN ASSAILANTS ALLEGEDLY ATTACKED A
GROUP OF TEN RECENTLY RESETTLED PEASANTS IN THEIR SHACKS
THE NIGHT OF OCTOBER 28. FARM WORKERS ARE ANGRY AT THE
LOSS OF THEIR MEANS OF SURVIVAL, AND THIS IS LEADING TO
INCREASING CONFRONTATIONS AND VIOLENCE. THE COMMERCIAL
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FARMERS UNION (CFU) BELIEVES THAT MUGABE'S THREAT TO END
RECONCILIATION WITH WHITES IN ZIMBABWE HAS EMBOLDENED
THE WAR VETERANS AND ALSO ADDED TO THE INCREASED
VIOLENCE.

THREE COMMERCIAL FARMERS ASSAULTED IN TEN DAYS

13. (C) BETWEEN OCTOBER 22 AND OCTOBER 31 THREE WHITE
COMMERCIAL FARMERS WERE VIOLENTLY ASSAULTED BY WAR
VETERANS ON THEIR FARMS. ON OCTOBER 22 A FARMER ON
DAWMILL FARM IN MASHONALAND CENTRAL PROVINCE ASKED
OCCUPIERS TO MOVE THEIR CATTLE AND SHEEP THAT WERE
BLOCKING A FARM ROAD. THEREAFTER, HE WAS SET UPON BY A
GROUP OF MEN WHO KNOCKED HIM TO THE GROUND AND VIOLENTLY
KICKED HIM UNTIL HE PASSED OUT. ON OCTOBER 31 A FARMER
ON NYAMWANGA FARM, ALSO IN MASHONALAND CENTRAL PROVINCE,
WAS ATTEMPTING TO PROCEED WITH COTTON PLANTING WHEN A
GROUP OF WAR VETERANS SET UPON HIM WITH AX HANDLES AND
BEAT HIM UNCONSCIOUS. WHEN HIS FARM WORKERS CAME TO HIS
RESCUE A SCUFFLE ENSUED THAT ENDED WITH A SCORE OF FARM
WORKERS AND WAR VETERANS REQUIRING MEDICAL TREATMENT FOR
THEIR INJURIES. ON OCTOBER 26 A FARMER IN MANICALAND
PROVINCE WAS VIOLENTLY ASSAULTED IN HIS FARMHOUSE,

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FM AMEMBASSY HARARE
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 7508
INFO NSC WASHDC PRIORITY
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PURPORTEDLY BY ROBBERS. (COMMENT: AGAINST THE BACKDROP
OF THE LAWLESSNESS, CHAOS, AND ANARCHY THAT IS OCCURRING
ON COMMERCIAL FARMS IN THE NAME OF PRESIDENT MUGABE'S
FAST-TRACK LAND REFORM AND RESETTLEMENT, IT IS HARD TO
BELIEVE THAT THIS ASSAULT IS NOT LINKED TO THE LAND
ISSUE. END COMMENT.)

A GOZ MINISTER TELLS PEASANTS TO PICK THEIR OWN LAND

14. (C) IGNATIUS CHOMBO, THE MINISTER OF LOCAL

GOVERNMENT, PUBLIC WORKS AND NATIONAL HOUSING, WHO IS ALSO THE CHAIRMAN OF THE GOZ LAND TASK FORCE, APPEARED ON ZBC TELEVISION ADDRESSING A GROUP OF PEASANTS IN THE DARWENDALE/TRELAWNEY AREA. HE TOLD THE ASSEMBLED GROUP TO GO AHEAD AND PARCEL OUT FARMS TO THEMSELVES BECAUSE OF A SHORTAGE OF GOVERNMENT TECHNICIANS TO DEMARCAT E PLOTS. HE STATED "WE WILL HAVE TO ATTEND TO THAT LATER. GO AHEAD AND RESETTLE YOURSELVES IN TIME FOR THE RAINS." THIS STATEMENT HAS GIVEN A GREEN LIGHT TO LANDLESS PEOPLE, AND ANYONE ELSE, TO DESCEND ON COMMERCIAL FARMS, WHETHER GAZETTED BY THE GOZ FOR COMPULSORY ACQUISITION OR NOT, AND TO DECIDE AMONG THEMSELVES WHO GETS WHAT.

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THE FARM WORKERS WHO LIVE AND WORK ON THESE FARMS ARE OFTEN NOT WILLING TO STAND ASIDE AND ALLOW THEIR LIVELIHOODS TO BE DESTROYED. THE RESULT IS AN INCREASE IN THE NUMBER OF CLASHES BETWEEN FARM INVADERS AND FARM WORKERS.

CLEAR SIGNS OF POLICE AND MILITARY INVOLVEMENT

15. (C) THE EMBASSY IS RECEIVING NEW REPORTS THAT ZIMBABWE POLICE AND MILITARY VEHICLES ARE BEING USED TO FERRY FARM INVADERS TO COMMERCIAL FARMS. THERE ARE ALSO REPORTS THAT POLICE AND MILITARY PERSONNEL (BOTH ARMY AND AIR FORCE) ARE INCREASINGLY GOING TO FARMS TO STAKE OUT LAND FOR THEMSELVES. IN ONE REPORT FROM THE CFU, A ZIMBABWE AIR FORCE HELICOPTER FLEW OVER A FARM NEAR FORT MARTIN TO VERIFY WHETHER THE COMMERCIAL FARMER WAS COMPLYING WITH ORDERS NOT TO PLANT.

ZANU-PF PUSHES AMENDED LAND ACT

16. (C) IN THE MIDST OF THE INCREASING VIOLENCE AND FARM OCCUPATIONS, ZANU-PF PUSHED THROUGH PARLIAMENT AN AMENDMENT TO THE LAND ACQUISITION ACT CODIFYING PRESIDENT MUGABE'S APRIL DECREE UNDER THE PRESIDENTIAL POWERS ACT ALTERING THE LAW. THIS LEGISLATION IS INTENDED TO NEGATE THE IMPACT OF THE SUPREME COURT DECISION IN A LANDMARK LAWSUIT THAT THE CFU FILED

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AGAINST MUGABE FOR TAKING UNCONSTITUTIONAL ACTIONS IN HIS FAST-TRACK LAND REFORM PLAN UNDER THE PRESIDENTIAL POWERS ACT, AMONG OTHER CHARGES. (COMMENT: THE SUPREME COURT IS TO BEGIN HEARING THE CFU CASE ON NOVEMBER 6 AND IS WIDELY EXPECTED TO RULE IN FAVOR OF THE PLAINTIFF. END COMMENT).

MDC MP DAVID COLTART COMMENTS

17. (C) MDC MP DAVID COLTART, A LONG-STANDING EMBASSY CONTACT TOLD EMBASSY OFFICIALS ON NOVEMBER 1 THAT WHAT WAS OCCURRING IN THE NAME OF LAND REFORM AND RESETTLEMENT WAS PART OF A MASTER PLAN BY MUGABE. HE SAID THAT WHILE IT WAS NOT BEING IMPLEMENTED IN A PARTICULARLY ORGANIZED FASHION, IT WAS BEING PLANNED AND LED BY THE GOVERNMENT. HE BELIEVES THAT THIS IS CLEARLY SUBSTANTIATED BY THE ROLE THE WAR VETERANS HAD PLAYED IN LEADING THE OCCUPATIONS, AND THE USE OF POLICE AND MILITARY VEHICLES TO FERRY OCCUPIERS TO FARMS. IN SOME INSTANCES, HE BELIEVES THAT PEOPLE ARE BEING BROUGHT TO OCCUPY FARMS AGAINST THEIR WILL, OR AT LEAST UNDER FALSE PRETENSES. HE SAID THAT MANY FARMERS TELL STORIES OF LARGE NUMBERS OF PEOPLE BEING BROUGHT TO THEIR FARMS,

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 7509
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AND WITHIN A FEW DAYS MOST DRIFT AWAY. CFU EXECUTIVES
HAVE CONFIRMED THIS WITH ECONOFF.

18. (C) COLTART STATED THAT MUGABE'S REAL GOAL IS TO
DESTROY COMMERCIAL AGRICULTURE IN ZIMBABWE IN ORDER TO
ELIMINATE WHAT THE PRESIDENT BELIEVES TO BE THE MOST
IMPORTANT BASE OF FINANCIAL SUPPORT FOR THE MDC IN
ZIMBABWE. CFU EXECUTIVES ALSO AGREE WITH THIS
ASSESSMENT. COLTART WENT SO FAR AS TO SAY THAT
PRESIDENT MUGABE DOES NOT CARE IF THIS RESULTS IN THE
UTTER DESTRUCTION OF ZIMBABWE'S ECONOMY. ACCORDING TO
COLTART, ONE OF MUGABE'S CLOSEST CONFIDANTS, OBERT
MPOFU, THE CONTROVERSIAL GOVERNOR OF MATABELELAND NORTH
PROVINCE (HE HAS PROCLAIMED THAT ONLY ZANU-PF SUPPORTERS
WILL BE RESETTLED IN HIS PROVINCE) HAS STATED THAT IT
MATTERS NOT IF THE ECONOMY IS DESTROYED, FOR THE RULING
PARTY WILL THEN REBUILD IT JUST AS THE JAPANESE REBUILT
THEIR ECONOMY AFTER WORLD WAR II.

ZIMBABWE'S FUTURE FOOD SECURITY HANGS IN THE BALANCE

19. (C) ALL OF THE ABOVE BODES VERY ILL FOR ZIMBABWE'S
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FUTURE FOOD SECURITY. THE FINANCIAL PROBLEMS OF THE
GRAIN MARKETING BOARD (GMB) PARASTATAL RESULTED IN ITS
DELAYED PURCHASE OF LAST YEAR'S BUMPER MAIZE CROP. ONLY
IN THE LAST TWO WEEKS HAS THE GMB RECEIVED A LINE OF
CREDIT FROM THE GOZ ALLOWING IT TO BEGIN PURCHASING
MAIZE. ZIMBABWE'S COMMUNAL FARMERS, WHO PRODUCE ROUGHLY
60% OF THE COUNTRY'S MAIZE, DEPEND ON SALES TO THE GMB
OF THEIR HARVEST TO SUPPLY THE FUNDS NECESSARY TO BUY
THE SEED, FERTILIZER, AND OTHER INPUTS NEEDED TO PLANT
THE FOLLOWING YEAR'S CROP. WITH THE DELAY IN PURCHASES,
MANY COMMUNAL FARMERS HAVE NOT BEEN ABLE TO BEGIN
PLANTING THIS YEAR'S MAIZE CROP. THIS SITUATION IS
WORSENERED BY THE DRAMATIC RISE IN THE PRICE OF FERTILIZER
AND DIESEL FUEL, BOTH CRITICAL INPUTS TO PLANTING MAIZE.
COLTART STATED THAT THE GMB HAS ONLY PURCHASED 30% OF
THE HISTORICAL AMOUNT OF GRAIN BAGS THAT IT USES TO BAG
UP COMMUNAL FARMERS' MAIZE AFTER PURCHASE. ACCORDING TO
COLTART, THE MAJORITY OF LAST YEAR'S MAIZE CROP IS JUST
SITTING OUT IN THE OPEN ON COMMUNAL FARMS, NOW GETTING
RAINED ON, A FACT THAT WILL RESULT IN ITS BECOMING UNFIT
FOR HUMAN CONSUMPTION. MEANWHILE, ACCORDING TO THE CFU,
COMMERCIAL FARMERS, WHO NORMALLY ACCOUNT FOR 40% OF THE
NATION'S MAIZE CROP, ARE GOING TO PLANT 55% LESS MAIZE.
THIS DECISION IS DUE TO LOW MAIZE PRICES, UNCERTAINTY
THAT THEY WILL BE ABLE TO HARVEST THEIR CROP AT THE END
OF THE SEASON, AS WELL AS UNCERTAINTY THAT THE GMB WILL
BE ABLE TO BUY THEIR CROP. THESE SIGNS INDICATE THAT
THE POSSIBILITY IS INCREASING THAT ZIMBABWE WILL FACE A
MAJOR SHORTFALL IN ITS MAIZE CROP NEXT YEAR, AT A TIME
WHEN THE GOZ WILL LACK THE NECESSARY FOREIGN EXCHANGE TO
PAY FOR IMPORTS.

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110. (C) COMMENT: THE GOZ'S CONTINUING "DAMN THE
TORPEDOES" ATTITUDE IN PURSUING THE POORLY (IF AT ALL)
PLANNED FAST-TRACK LAND REFORM AND RESETTLEMENT PROGRAM,
REGARDLESS OF THE PREDICTED COST TO COMMERCIAL
AGRICULTURE, INCLUDING EXPORT CROPS, IS EXTREMELY
WORRISOME. IT CALLS INTO QUESTION THE FUTURE VIABILITY
OF THE NATIONAL ECONOMY AND THE AVAILABILITY OF FOOD FOR
12 MILLION ZIMBABWEANS. END COMMENT.

MCDONALD

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